



Connecting Creatively to the Landscape
Nature based activity guide for Care Homes



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Connecting creatively to the
landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and Forest of Dean

mindSCAPE is a Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) project, funded by the Big Lottery (2014-2018), then Arts Council England (2019-21) and led and delivered by Artspace Cinderford. The mindSCAPE project aims to improve the well-being of people with dementia and their carers by connecting them to the landscape in a creative way.



Through the Heritage Lottery Funded Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme, the mindSCAPE model is also delivered in care home settings. This resource guide has been produced through the Foresters' Forest programme. It includes ten, easy-to-follow practical activities as well as important considerations for a manager or activity co-ordinator to plan, develop, implement or deliver a mindSCAPE activity in their residential care home.

The booklet is based on hands-on experience and learning from those who have:

- engaged in the activity, e.g. participants with dementia and their carers.
- delivered the activities, e.g. commissioned artists and creative facilitators.
- organised, planned, developed and implemented the activities in the Forest of Dean since 2014, e.g managers and volunteers.

Participating in a nature based creative activity is not about focusing on the finished product. It is to be seen as an exploration and adventure - an opportunity to allow the freedom of expression. Therefore, it is essential the person delivering or supporting the activity does not 'manage' or 'control' the participants' creativity. A successful activity is where those engaging in the activity are able to freely explore and 'find their flow' in the process of being creative.

"In a care home it's an opportunity for someone to reduce boredom. Boredom is a real issue for people with dementia - they need to be stimulated." (Carer)

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Introduction

Delivering a nature-based activity improves people's emotional well-being. Working as part of a group helps to reduce isolation and there is a wealth of scientific and medical research that shows that the natural environment helps to reduce stress and anxiety levels and improve mobility and fitness.

It also provides a format to deliver person-centred care and achieves a significant number of standards and good practice guidelines that are set out by the National Standards for Clinical Excellence (NICE), the Care Quality Commission and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

For example: Quality Standard 4: Dementia: Independence and Wellbeing (QS30):

“It is important that people with dementia can take part in leisure activities during their day that are meaningful to them. People have different interests and preferences about how they wish to spend their time. People with dementia are no exception but increasingly need the support of others to participate. Understanding this and how to enable people with dementia to take part in leisure activities can help maintain and improve quality of life.”



Research shows people benefit from participating in arts-based activities. Evidence reveals these activities can help to:

- enhance the person's sense of self
- improve their mood and mobility
- facilitate social contact with others
- promote self confidence
- unleash unknown artistic talents!

“Artwork provides a shared conversation piece. He is very proud of what he has done – he shows people who visit what he has achieved.” (Carer)

Important Considerations

A successful activity; a) meets the needs of those participating in the activity such as the clients and those supporting the clients such as volunteers and, b) fulfils the vision and objectives of the care home.

Therefore, before you deliver any activities, have you thought about the following issues:

- Funding – have you adequate funding to pay for materials?
- Co-ordinating – who will plan the activities that are to be delivered?
- Scheduling – will the activity be delivered at the same time every week or month?
- Decision-making – who will lead the activity?
- Reporting – is there a responsibility for the person delivering the activity to report on the participants' level of engagement in the activity?
- Evaluating – who will monitor and evaluate the activity?
- Supporting - who will support the participants during the activity?



“Be mindful of resistance from staff to the extra work.” (Carer)

Participants need to feel safe. Therefore, is your care home providing:

- A designated space to deliver the activities that is a safe space where it won't interfere with those who might not want to participate?
- Comfortable chairs for people to sit on and tables for them to use?
- Easy access to a toilet and/or a hand basin?
- Assistants to help the less able to engage in the activity?



“To be introduced to a creative process has given birth to something creative.” (Carer)

mindSCAPE Activity Sheets

You do not need to be artistically talented or qualified to deliver the activities in this Resource Booklet. Furthermore, whilst getting outside is an aim of many of the activities, this is not always possible and nearly all can be delivered indoors. However, this may require additional preparation time to collect natural materials in advance.

Each activity sheet:

- States whether the activity can be delivered inside the care home, outdoors or both indoors and outdoors.
- Is colour coded to help you choose which activity best suits the season:
 - o Spring = Yellow
 - o Summer = Green
 - o Autumn = Orange
 - o Winter = Blue
- Gives an outline of:
 - o a basic description of the activity.
 - o the required ability of the participant.
 - o the preparation time needed.
 - o the time required to carry out the activity.
 - o a shopping list of the materials required to deliver the activity.
 - o a step-by-step process on 'how to deliver' the activity.
 - o top tips!

It may also be important to practice some of the activities in advance so that you are familiar with the process. This will also mean that you have an example to show people.



Activities devised by Warren Day

Spring Activities



"This has proved to be a great stress reliever and has enabled me to learn new skills and potentially take up new hobbies."

(mindSCAPE Participant)



Connecting creatively to the landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and Forest of Dean.

BEE HOTEL



Help the bees out this year by making them somewhere to stay in your garden. Using a simple tin can and some bamboo canes, along with a few other found objects for filling such as pine cones and leaves, you can make a comfortable and protective space for the bees and enhance your local eco-system.

Activity rating

All abilities but some help may be needed to cut the bamboo canes. **Take care of sharp edges around opening of can.**

Preparation time

Approx. 15 minutes to lay out the materials. A walk outside could be incorporated into the practical activity to pick up the pine cones, leaves etc. that are used as a filling in between the canes.

Time required for activity

30 minutes

Shopping list

- o Empty washed tin cans such as soup or baked bean cans.
- o Bamboo canes of various diameter sizes.
- o Mini hacksaw.
- o Hammer.
- o Some sort of pole/ metal rod capable of poking through the bamboo and removing the soft interior.
- o Natural string.
- o Leaves, small pine cones, seed pods etc.

BEE HOTEL



Step by step instructions

1. Cut several bamboo canes to just slightly under the length of the can (about 1cm) so when they are inside they do not poke out. You only need to cut enough to fill roughly 80% of the can.
2. Once cut to size, take your metal rod/sturdy knitting needle and poke it through the bamboo cane to remove as much of the soft inside as you can. You may wish to use a small hammer to help knock it through.
3. Place the different hollowed canes into the can and infill the gaps with the leaves and cones. You will know when you have enough because you will be able to turn it upside down without anything falling out, as it is wedged in nicely.
4. Tie some natural string around the can several times leaving enough to form a loop that can be used to hang your bug hotel from a nail or similar on the wall.

Top tip!

- When you place these in your garden/outdoor space it is best to situate them in direct sunlight and out of the rain as this will warm the hotel and encourage the bees to wake up and get to work!



21ST CENTURY FOSSILS



Plaster casts can be created from organic forms such as fern leaves, shells or even some vegetables such as carrots, and will have the look of a prehistoric fossil!

Activity rating

Suitable for all participants but some may need help with preparing the clay.

Preparation time

Approx. 15 minutes to prepare your table with the materials and natural objects.

Time required for activity

Approx. 45 minutes. About 30 minutes to create the impressed clay mould and another 15 minutes to mix and pour the plaster.

Shopping list

- o Plaster of Paris (from art & craft shops or online).
- o Air dry clay.
- o Rolling pins.
- o Natural objects to impress into clay.
- o Pouring jug.

21ST CENTURY FOSSILS



Step by step instructions

1. Cover the table with a cloth.
2. Roll out a ball of clay (roughly the size of an orange) to a thickness of about 2cm. Before you commit to one object, test out a few by pressing them into the clay. Sometimes this works well if you do it at an angle, as it looks more like a random fossil. Bigger or longer objects will need either more clay or will need to be rolled in such a direction that the natural form will fit inside it.
3. Some natural forms like leaves or flowers can be gently rolled into the clay. Carefully peel them out to reveal the very subtle but detailed imprint they will have left.
4. Once you have found an object/s you like the look of, roll out the clay again but this time curl up the edges with your fingers to create a small wall around the edge of about 1.5 cm. Make sure this is consistent around the edge, as the liquid plaster may spill over any parts of the wall that are too low.
5. Mix up your plaster in the jug by following the instructions on the packaging. Be warned that the plaster takes a while to set and you may think you need to add more plaster! Don't worry, just be patient.
6. Place all the moulds near each other in a small group and when the plaster is the consistency of double cream, pour it into each of the moulds, making sure it does not spill over the edge.
7. Leave to dry over night and then gently peel off the clay from the plaster 'fossil'.

Top Tips!

- Never pour wet plaster down a sink. It is best left to dry hard and then you can just tap it out into a bin.
- You can stain the plaster with a strong solution of tea or coffee if you want to give it a realistic effect by brushing it over and lightly wiping it off again.

Summer Activities



**“The activity was great fun and relaxing although hard work ha ha!
Lunch was lovely. We enjoyed spending time outdoors and find everyone
so friendly and kind.”**

(mindSCAPE Participant)



EXPRESSIVE NATURAL BRUSHES



Most artists have a variety of paint brushes to use in their work as it enables them to make different marks for different subject matter. Have fun creating your own bespoke brushes using natural forms to create expressive and experimental marks! The brush ends can be substituted with feathers, dried teasel, natural sponges, twigs, leaves and so on. All of these new alternative brushes will give you some really unusual effects

Activity rating - Suitable for everyone.

Preparation time

15 - 30 minutes to gather objects that can be used for the tip of the brush. This could be partly incorporated into the practical activity by taking a walk into the garden.

Time required for activity

30 minutes.

Shopping list

- o Garden sticks or canes or anything similar to become your paintbrush handles.
- o Natural brush alternatives: feathers, teasel or similar, pine leaves, natural sponge, twigs etc.
- o Household items: tinsel, bubble wrap, string, scrunched paper, pipe cleaner.
- o Paper.
- o Black ink or black paint (not too thick).
- o String.
- o Scissors.
- o Masking tape.

Step by step instructions

1. Cover the table with a cloth to protect it.
2. Take your stick and attach your new brush tip to the end with either string or masking tape. It doesn't need to look neat so don't worry about aesthetics!
3. Once you have made several different paintbrushes, dip them into your ink and experiment with the expressive marks the participants are capable of making.
4. You may wish to use a twig dipped in ink as a pencil to make more traditional looking line drawings alongside your new brush marks.

Top Tip!

- If you don't have any ink, try using some black paint which has been slightly thinned with water to make it flow easier.

NATURAL HANGING CENTRE PIECE



Use the abundance of natural forms found in the forest or other natural landscape and make an attractive rustic hanging decoration that you can place either outdoors or inside. You can be imaginative with this and collect objects near to your location that you think would look good integrated into your artwork. When arranged in a simple vertical pattern, the subtle change of colour and textures, even of the most ordinary of objects, look artistic and visually interesting! Some objects would benefit from a drill hole and are not difficult to do if you are competent with a cordless drill.

Activity rating

Suitable for most people although some assistance may be required with making simple knots and threading the string through holes. It is recommended that a member of staff pre-drill the objects with a cordless drill or is at hand to do so during the activity.

Preparation time

This activity would require someone to take a walk and collect the objects or this could be incorporated into the activity if participants are able to explore care home gardens for materials. It's a perfect dog walking type of walk where you pick the pine cones, pieces of interesting wood etc.

About 15 minutes to set out the objects and equipment on a table. The objects can be pre drilled or possibly drilled on site by a member of staff with a cordless drill and a block of wood to protect the table.

Time required for activity

Depending on the amount of objects the participants thread, the activity should take about 1 hour and 10 minutes for 4 threads worth.

Shopping list

- o Some suitable pieces of wood to act as the main hanging bar. These can be roughly 30-40 cm long.
- o A collection of natural objects such as pine cones of different sizes (part squirrel eaten possibly!), small pieces of selected wood, pieces/flakes of bark, mixed shells (these can be purchased online as a mixed bag).
- o Natural string.
- o Scissors.

Optional:

- o Small pieces of stone, pebbles or coal to wrap in wire.
- o Pliable wire to encapsulate the stones.
- o Saw to cut off small chips of wood the size of a draught piece.

NATURAL HANGING CENTRE PIECE



Step by step instructions

1. Let the participants select the 'top bar' piece of wood. Some may be twisted, mossy, stripped of bark etc.
2. Select a number of different objects and arrange them into 3/4 columns on the table with the intention of creating a pleasing balance of shapes, colours and textures. About 3/4 objects look good in each column. The bigger/heavier objects such as the pine cones may look better at the bottom end.
3. Take a piece of string roughly 3 feet long and tie a double knot at one end. This will become the bottom of your first hanging thread.
4. Some of your objects may need a small drill hole or may have already been drilled. If this has been done, you can thread the string through the hole. A small piece of wire bent into a hook may help at times.
5. For some objects like the pine cones or small rocks, it is possible to wrap the pliable modelling wire around to create a hook or cage respectively.
6. Once you have threaded your first object, roughly calculate the distance for the next double knot and tie this into place.
7. Thread the string through the hole or wire of the next item and repeat until you have the desired amount. The remaining length of string can be then wrapped around the 'top bar' and another piece of string added to allow the hanging to be placed on a wall/tree.

Top Tips!

- Mixed shells for use with crafts projects can be easily purchased online from well known sellers.
- If you stain the string with a strong tea mix either before hand or after, it gives it a lovely golden colour and enhances the overall look.

NATURAL PIGMENT EARTH PAINTS ON WOOD



The landscape floor around us in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley consists of a multitude of colours. Red and yellow ochres, grey and brown can all be achieved by grinding small samples of earth in a pestle and mortar. Similarly, black and white can be made from charcoal and chalk. These harmonious natural colours look amazing when painted upon pieces of found wood or boards to produce stunning pieces of artwork or rustic signs.

Activity rating

Suitable for all abilities but some earth samples may be harder to grind in the pestle and mortars than others.

Preparation time

Approx. 15 minutes to prepare the table with the different earth samples and kit. You will need to have collected different colours of earth beforehand and it is best to have let it dry out over a few days if possible. A walk in the woods gives you the chance to see a surprising variety of colours once you begin to look.

Time required for activity

1 hour +

Shopping list

- o Earth pigments – red, yellow, grey, brown etc.
- o Charcoal for black.
- o Chalk for white (purchased if needs be).
- o Pestle and mortar. More than one allows others to mix different colours at the same time.
- o PVA glue to act as a binder for the earth pigments.
- o Pot to mix earth paint in.
- o Pot of water.
- o Some suitable brushes.
- o Selected pieces of wood – either found wood such as driftwood, an old fence panel or even a branch that has had its bark removed. All would benefit from being washed beforehand and allowed to dry.

NATURAL PIGMENT EARTH PAINTS ON WOOD



Step by Step Instructions

1. Take a small sample of earth and begin to grind it down with the pestle and mortar until you have achieved the consistency of powdered hot chocolate. Don't overload the amount as it will be harder to process.

2. Once you have created a fine powder, pour it into a pot and add a teaspoon of PVA glue and water. Mix this up until you get a flow similar to single cream. You may need to add small amounts of water gradually to attain this.

3. When you have created your colours, take your driftwood, board or stick and start to paint simple patterns and designs. Good marks to use would be simple dots and lines similar to aboriginal art as this produces a strong visual effect.

4. It is best to paint using short strokes or dabs as the paint works better when applied thickly. When dry the colours become brighter and the finished item can be placed either inside or outside such as a garden wall or sign for a cabin door etc.

Top tip!

- The pestle and mortars can be used for the natural berry ink activity.

Autumn Activities





“It is good to have activities that run into each other. He finds it hard to cope with too much change each time.”

(Carer)



NATURAL BLACKBERRY INK & DIP PEN DRAWING



The perfect time to pick delicious blackberries is late summer/early Autumn and why not use the leftovers to create your very own natural ink, which you can use to make beautiful drawings of other natural objects using a found stick as a dip pen. You may be lucky enough to have blackberries in the garden which you could pick as a group and become part of the activity.

Activity rating

This activity is suitable for most people of any age but the sharpening of the stick dip pen would be best undertaken by staff.

Preparation time

15 minutes to prepare for the activity including covering the tables with a cloth.

Time required for activity

40 - 60 minutes.

Shopping list

- o A bowl of blackberries either picked locally or a (defrosted) bag from the supermarket which you could do at any time of the year.
- o Pestle and mortar.
- o A teaspoon of salt and white vinegar (not essential unless keeping for a longer period of time).
- o Some kind of sieve.
- o Some small sticks/twigs from the garden.
- o A suitable knife to sharpen the sticks.
- o A pot to collect the berry ink.
- o Assorted papers for drawing.
- o Several natural objects to capture in your drawing, such as other plants, dried flowers/seed heads, leaves etc.
- o Aprons.

NATURAL BLACKBERRY INK & DIP PEN DRAWING



Step by step instructions

1. Cover the work surface with a cloth as the berry juice may stain certain surfaces.
2. Take 4 or 5 blackberries and begin to crush them with the pestle and mortar to release the lovely dark red juice. Spend a couple of minutes doing this to achieve a really good depth of colour.
3. Pour all of the contents through the sieve with a suitable container to collect just the juice which is now your ink!
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have the correct amount for your group size. You will not need much as the ink will go a long way.
5. If you wish to preserve these drawings, add a very small teaspoon of white vinegar and salt, as this will help to prevent rotting and fading, although this is minimal and so not essential.
6. Take a small stick the size of a pencil and simply sharpen the end to a point. You can make really fine points or quite blunt points, and you will achieve different qualities of line when you produce your drawings.
7. Take your new dip pen and dip it into the berry ink making sure it has soaked some of the juice onto the wood before having a go at making some drawings. You will need to keep dipping the pen into the ink 2 or 3 times a minute.

NB: What you may notice is that the reddish ink colour changes over several minutes to a blue/grey colour! This is normal and due to the acid content in the paper you are using.

Top Tip!

- You can use the pestle and mortars for the natural earth painting activity.

MIXED MEDIA MEANDER MEMORY BOX



Many artists have used the 'curiosity box' format to display their work. It has a pleasing formal appearance that shows off objects which you have chosen to display. Have a go at making a box structure with simple compartments using small pieces of plywood and wooden dowling to create compartments. You can then go for a walk in your favourite spot and pick up small pieces of interest to display such as a seed head, an old piece of china, pine cone, dried flower or maybe an old photograph or written note.

Activity rating

Some participants would need help to measure the dowling to the length required and then to cut it. A simple small hack saw can be used and any competent staff member could cut the dowling on-site as the thickness is minimal. Also the glue gun would best be used by staff. It is a popular activity and well worth the effort as the final piece can be kept and displayed elsewhere.

Preparation time

About 15 minutes to prepare the table with all the resources. A short walk outside may be incorporated into this to enable participants to find and select their own objects to place inside the boxes.

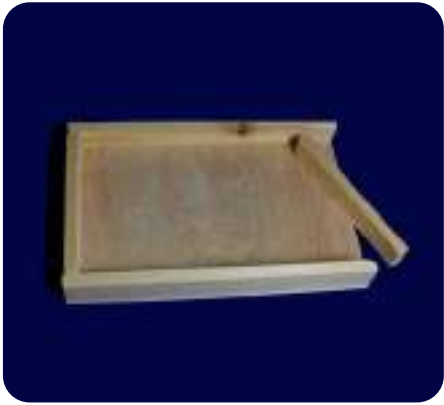
Time required for activity

1 hour to 1 hour 20 minutes.

Shopping list

- o Some thin pieces of plywood or similar cut to a manageable size such as A4 – you could use pre cut cardboard if it is stiff enough to create the back of the box structure.
- o Glue gun.
- o Pencils.
- o Ruler (optional).
- o Brushes.
- o Strong tea/coffee mix to stain the wood (could use a light wash of poster paint or similar).
- o Hairdryer.
- o A variety of small natural/man made objects from a walk or a roam.

MIXED MEDIA MEANDER MEMORY BOX



Step by step instructions

1. Lay out a table cloth to protect the table.

2. By using the plywood backboards as a guide, measure the height and width in cm so you can then transfer this to the dowling.

Remember that if you have two lengths of dowling for the sides (height) then the space in between (width) will be slightly shorter as it fits inside these.

3. Transfer these measurements to the dowling and cut the four sides for the outside frame for your box and then place them into position on the backboard. You don't need to stick this down yet as you have the chance to move things around at first to find the best composition.

4. Next select about 5-6 objects that you wish to display. Some may be slightly larger than others and also heavier. If you intend to use a heavier object, it may be best to use a glue gun later to ensure it adheres to the backboard.

5. Now place them inside the frame and move them around until you find a composition that you find pleasing. The intention is to separate these items with more dowling to section them off into small compartments.

6. When you are satisfied with the look, draw a light pencil line separating the objects to act as a guide for your next dowling lengths.

7. Now offer the dowling up to your frame and mark off the required lengths with the pencil and cut them. It's best to do this piece by piece so you don't forget where each one goes or you could add a simple a,b,c,d code if your prefer.

8. At this stage you have the choice to colour/stain the backboard and wood. A simple wash of strong tea or a white wash of poster paint can look effective, is pretty easy to do and can be dried quickly with a hairdryer before the next stage.

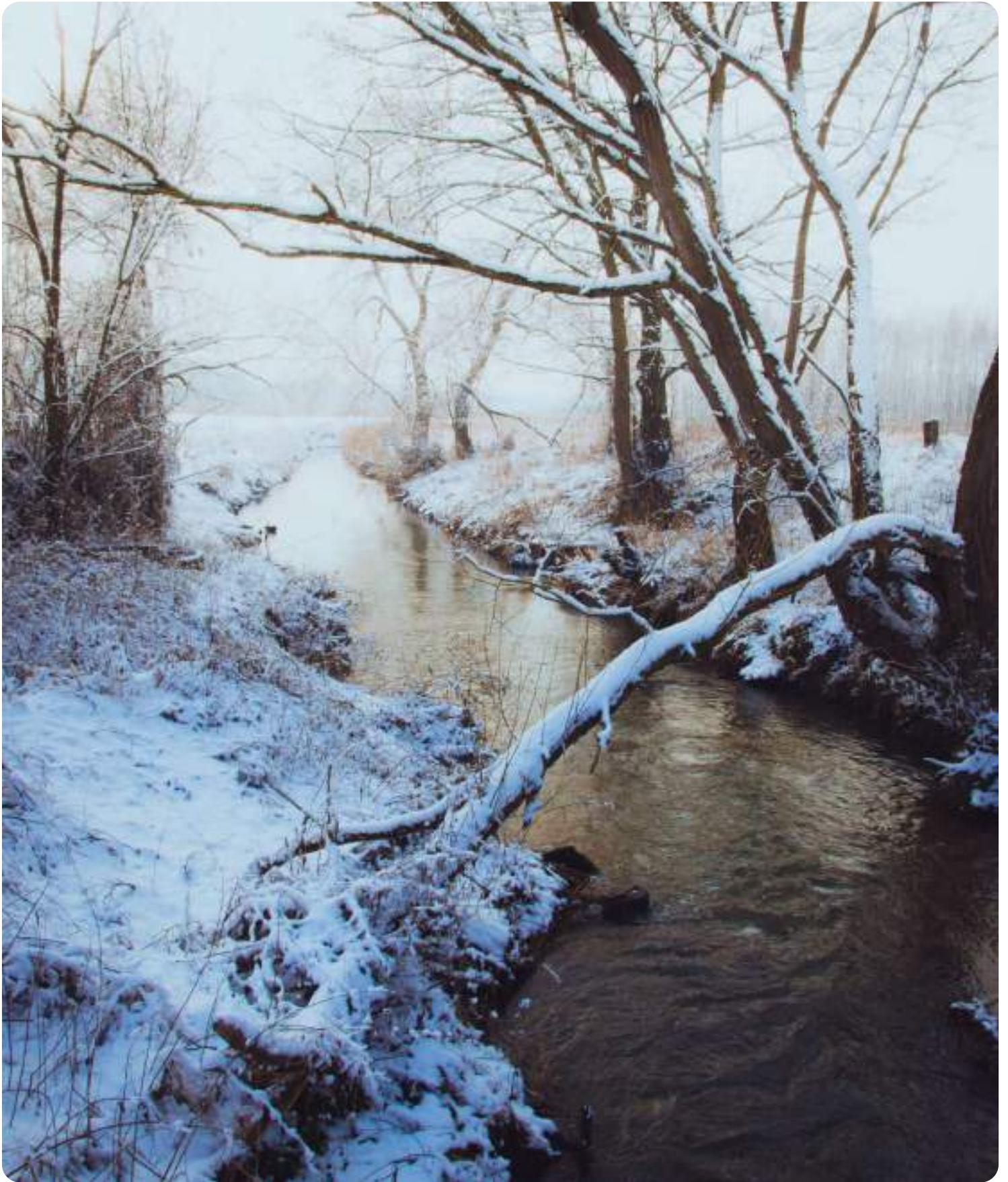
9. Using the glue gun or PVA glue, stick all of the dowling onto the backboard.

10. Being careful not to nudge your frame and compartments, carefully glue the objects into place and allow to dry thoroughly.

Top Tip!

- When your mixed media meander box is dry, you could screw in some eyelets to hang it on a wall!

Winter Activities



“I am able to settle into these sessions and remain for the whole time. Sometimes I have to leave activities after only a short time. Not with this.”

(mindSCAPE Participant)

TEXTURES IN THE LANDSCAPE



Texture is around us everywhere so have fun exploring the different marks you can achieve by rubbing wax crayons over a variety of natural surfaces to produce an experimental and multi coloured outcome. By adding a wash of watercolour afterwards, any wax marks will resist the paint and just colour the paper giving you a vibrant and colourful result! Possibly consider making small texture boards before hand by gluing down textures like rice, orange bag netting, tree bark, leaves, dried spaghetti, coins, string, jigsaw puzzle pieces, wooden board.

Activity rating

Suitable for all participants. It may be possible for some participants to investigate potential rubbings in the garden.

Preparation time

15 minutes

Time required for activity

30 minutes to 1 hour

Shopping list

- o Textured surfaces/pre-made texture boards.
- o Cheap photocopier paper to rub over.
- o Coloured crayons.
- o Water based paints.
- o Brushes.

Step by step instructions

1. Place your paper over the textures and whilst keeping the paper still, gently rub the long flat edge of the crayon over the surface. Experiment with pressure to see if it enhances the quality and colour of the rubbing.

2. Move on to another texture and be sure to use a variety of colours, and if you want to exploit the wax resist effect, use a candle or white crayon so that when you paint over the rubbing the marks will jump out from the page.

3. From time to time slightly move the paper about 2cm and re-rub the area to create a repeat pattern effect.

4. When you have a variety of rubbings, mix up a diluted wash of water colour paint and lightly brush it over your rubbings to stain the paper but resist the wax.

Top Tip!

• If you make the texture board, you can reuse these again or for activities like block printing or guessing textures!

IMPRESSED DECORATION INTO CLAY OR TILES



Prehistoric people used the natural landscape around them to produce highly decorative pottery. They would use, pebbles, sticks, acorns, bones to gently impress (stamp) into the surface of the clay along with their fingers and finger nails to make an attractive repeat pattern. This effect can easily be achieved using air dry clay formed into simple thumb/pinch pots or flat rolled out tiles.

Activity rating

Suitable for most people. Some participants may be able to form a pinch pot whilst others may benefit from rolling out a small flat section of clay.

Preparation time

Preparing the table with the resources should take 10 minutes but some of the objects will need to be sourced beforehand. This could be partly done as a group task where participants explore the garden looking for suitable objects to 'stamp' or impress into the clay.

Time required for activity

20 – 60 minutes.

IMPRESSED DECORATION INTO CLAY OR TILES



Shopping list

- o Air dry clay – from most art/craft shops or online.
- o Natural objects such as pebbles, stones, pine cones, small animal bones, seed pods like acorns, small sticks. Be imaginative and explore what marks different objects and participants own fingers make upon a small test piece.
- o Protective table cloth.
- o Rolling pin.
- o Blunt knife to cut tile shapes.

Step by step instructions

1. Decide if you would like a small pot or a flat tile.
2. A pinch pot is quite easy to make. Place a small ball of clay the size of a tangerine into the palm of your hand and with the other hand press your thumb into the middle to create an indent. Now slowly turn the ball of clay around clockwise, whilst slightly squeezing what will be the outside of the pot. Continue this for a couple of minutes, until the outsides are much thinner, and it has formed a vessel like structure.
3. The tile format is easiest and requires a piece of clay to be rolled to about 1cm thick with a rolling pin. Aim to make tiles approx. 15cm square. The edges can be cut straight using the knife.
4. This is the fun part where you can experiment with the different objects by gently pressing them into the surface of the clay. Don't push so hard that it goes straight through, but do explore what pressure works best for each item. Repeat patterns create a strong visual design.

Top tips!

- Once dry, it is possible to paint over the air dry clay with a dilute wash of paint. Take a dark colour and loosely brush the paint over your design and then wipe it off again. The paint should collect in the recessed/stamped areas enhancing the impressed designs.
- Leftovers from the natural hanging decoration could be used to make the impressions.

IMAGE TRANSFER TO WOODEN PANELS



Image transfer is an easy and popular technique where a normal colour laser copy picture can be permanently transferred to another surface. It is like a traditional transfer but will need to be a laser copy in order for it to work (not an ink jet). Laser copiers are very common these days and can be found in most work places, libraries or in the high street. You will need to select some images and copy and paste them into a common program like Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, or just a JPEG image. You could also simply photocopy an image. Leaves, flowers and trees work well as a subject matter.

Activity rating

Suitable for everyone but some may benefit from help if they need to cut certain parts of the laser copy picture or use the hairdryer.

Preparation time

Approx. 15 minutes.

Images need to be selected beforehand and should not take too much time. Many (clear acrylic) transfer pastes can be bought in an art/craft shop or online easily and can be used for several sessions.

Time required for activity

Approx. 30 minutes.

Shopping List

- o Image transfer paste – any clear acrylic medium.
- o Colour laser copy pictures.
- o Brushes.
- o Scissors.
- o Some sort of wooden panel (old fence panels cut into small lengths, old chopping board, floor board etc.)
- o Hair dryer(s).
- o Small sponges and bowl of water.

IMAGE TRANSFER TO WOODEN PANELS



Step by step instructions

1. Take your chosen image and decide if you want to transfer all of it onto the wood or just a section. If you have a picture of some flowers but only wanted two or three, cut these out with the scissors. If the picture has a white background, just roughly cut around the picture to discard the white but don't worry about being too accurate.

2. The next stage is really easy but you must work on the correct side of the picture! Using the transfer paste, generously paste over the colour picture side and place it downwards onto the wood. Flatten it out with your fingers if necessary to achieve a good seal but don't brush over the back of it with the paste. The white side of the picture should be facing upwards and the colour image is now stuck facing downwards onto the board.

3. Using the hair dryer, heat the back of the image so that the paste completely hardens and is no longer a liquid. This may take 2-3 minutes.

4. Now the paste has been dried, take your wet sponge and wipe it over the image. You will be able to slightly see the original picture as the paper saturates with water. Wait about 30 seconds and then begin to rub the image with the tip of your finger. The wet paper should now begin to flake away and reveal more of the image. Keep wetting it so it doesn't scratch and repeat this process for several minutes until every paper fibre has been removed.

5. Let it dry once you feel you have removed enough paper. If it looks really misty and almost opaque when it is dry you can easily wet it again and repeat step 4.

6. If your image was just slightly misty then it's probably ready to have a final coat of image transfer paste brushed on top as this will act as a varnish and increase the clarity of the image.

7. The final artwork can be hung inside or outside as desired as it is completely waterproof.

Top tips!

- It is worth noting that any typography will need to be reversed when it is initially saved to a program file, else it will transfer backwards, but all other types of image will be fine.

Guidance for people supporting the activities...

It can be challenging and overwhelming to those who have not participated in a nature or arts based activity before. Therefore, it is important to have at least two people to support a group of six participants.

At the start of the session, ensure the participants you are supporting:

- Understand the aims of the activity – you may need to translate the instructions into their own language or terms of reference.
- Are able to access resources, materials and equipment to fully engage in the activity. If possible, assist them in clearing away their resources and materials at the end of the activity, thereby, leaving the area clean and tidy.
- Have every opportunity to do their own work, but do let the person leading the activity know of any difficulties that prevent them from participating fully.
- Feel safe. Follow the care home's policies if you identify any concerns, particularly safeguarding.

You have a key role in assisting the person, so please:

- Ensure you arrive on time at the start of the session.
- Leave your mobile phone switched to vibrate.
- Observe (or if required by the care home - record) the participants' behaviour in the activity and take note of what they achieved (or what provoked any form of agitation or difficulty).
- Know that your presence throughout the duration of the activity is greatly appreciated.

“It's all about getting into their world.” (Carer)

Background

mindSCAPE evolved from an earlier Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) project called 'Inside Out' which was developed in partnership with the Forestry Commission and designed to allow under-represented groups access to the landscape and work through health issues creatively. These participants included people with mental health issues, physical and mobility issues, visual and hearing impairments, drug and alcohol issues, learning difficulties and those with age related problems and caring roles.

This pioneering project revealed older people (particularly those with dementia and their carers) faced the greatest barriers to participation and were therefore the 'hardest to reach'. The need for a specialist project for people with dementia sparked a consultation process whereby the AONB focused on the barriers people faced and how these could best be overcome. This thorough consultation included over 40 partner organisations, service users and carers and was a key element of the successful 'mindSCAPE' bid to the Big Lottery.

The mindSCAPE model has been adapted for inclusion in the Heritage Lottery funded Foresters' Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme. It delivers nature and landscape arts-based activities in residential care settings, in order to reach those who are unable to attend the mindSCAPE project in the Forest of Dean.

Foresters' Forest Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership Scheme

“Our forest is a shadow of our past industrial endeavours, our built heritage is being lost, our memories are fading and our knowledge of our past is becoming blurred and grey. We have unique cultural traditions that are in danger of coming to an end as this generation passes. We want to grasp this opportunity to draw a line under a long period of steady decline and loss, to take time to refocus on what makes our Forest, our Community, our Story special. To take time to inspire our youngsters and capture the knowledge and memories of our older generation before we lose that special link with our past.” (Foresters Forest)

Within The Foresters' Forest Heritage Lottery funded Landscape Partnership Scheme, mindSCAPE is working with residents in residential care homes in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB. It builds on the learning from the mindSCAPE project and records the stories and creative imagery of these residents in order to celebrate, remember and connect to the beauty, history and heritage of the area.

This resource is a step-by-step guide to support those working in residential care homes to deliver activities. It will ensure the learning and experiences from the mindSCAPE project are sustained and replicated in other settings to benefit others.

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The Wye Valley AONB is a protected landscape, covering 92 km of the lower reaches of the River Wye from Mordiford to Chepstow, it is one of the finest lowland river landscapes in Britain. The AONB Unit are a small team who work, often in partnerships, to develop and deliver projects which contribute towards the areas natural beauty, and benefit people living in and visiting the landscape. MindSCAPE is one such project, which has been developed to enable people living with dementia and their carers to connect with the landscape in a sociable and creative way.



If you require further details of the mindSCAPE Project, please contact Hannah Elton-Wall at **Artspace Cinderford** on 01594 825 111 (extn 7) or e-mail: hannah@artspacecinderford.org



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

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